



**Mayor Daniel Dietch**  
**Commission Remarks**  
**March 12, 2019**

What kind of community do you want to live in? Think about it. What kind of community do you want to live in?

I made the decision to become active in Surfside soon after moving here with my family 19 years ago. I learned from my parents that you make the community you want to live in. This is just who I am. Over the years I have served on various boards and committees and ultimately decided to seek elected office in 2010 and I have served as your Mayor ever since.

I appreciate the responsibility of elected office and I take it seriously. At my first Commission meeting I made a promise to be “fair, sensible, and honest.” I also committed to be: “respectful to each other, our staff, our residents and our visitors.” I continued, “Being respectful does not mean always agreeing. In fact, a diversity of opinions is healthy and provides an opportunity to learn from each other. I look forward to healthy debates that result in positive solution-making. We all have different perspectives and I am open to any and all of them. We become better as a community by being inclusive rather than exclusive. I intend to listen and listen hard. I invite your participation whether it is criticism, suggestions, complaints or compliments.” I certainly make mistakes, but I know I have honored my promise and I have remained true to my commitment. This requires seeking solutions that are best for Surfside as a whole, in the short- and longer-term, and not just for a segment of our population or special interest.

I think we all agree Surfside has experienced many changes over the past nine years. I have done my best, with my colleagues, to set a vision for the community and adjust our laws, policies and priorities to meet the needs and desires of our residents and other stakeholders even as they change over time. Such changes are accomplished publicly and based on feedback from our many stakeholders.

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No doubt, with any decision, there will be some that disagree. But that does not mean the decision-makers have engaged in illegal, unethical or some other unsavory behavior. I have publicly stated many times I will not stand for even a hint of impropriety. Contact information for the FBI, State Attorney's Office and the County Ethics Commission has been shared at public meetings, in e-mail's and the Town has links on its website. Even with these efforts some in our community think it's acceptable to mail anonymous letters and place anonymous letters at people's homes. Sadly, this is a recurring activity. I first raised the issue in 2011 and it is now happening again. Truth be told, conspiracies spun on website, blogs and anonymous mailers have been around my entire time in Surfside. It was not okay then and is not okay now. And I ask my colleagues to publically repudiate such behavior. In these mailings, spurious claims are made that impugn to integrity and ethics of your elected leaders. At best, the allegations conflate facts to create a false narrative. As I stated in a community e-mail back in 2011, "many of the allegations have kernels of truth – they just do not tell the whole story. The kernels of truth are being manipulated whether by omitting the rest of the "story" or by misstating or taking those kernels out of context to form the basis of allegations of corruption and an underlying conspiracy. This phenomenon has been described by comedian Stephen Colbert as "truthiness." What is "truthiness"? It is defined as "knowledge based on intuition, without regard to evidence, logic, intellectual examination, or facts." "Truthiness" is no rational basis to allege corruption. Worse yet, it contributes to senseless disharmony in our community. I do not want to take the time tonight to address the many false statements contained in the series of letters. Instead, I invite you, our Surfside community, to join me at my next Town Hall meeting on March 19<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm to address the allegations, to hear the "rest of the story" and we can discuss what kind of community we want to live in.

I'll leave you with one of my favorite political quotes. It's from the Former Mayor of Miami Beach and member of the County Ethics Commission, Judge Seymour Gelber.

***"Sometimes when there is smoke there is fire...  
sometimes just a smoke machine."***